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# The United States and the Establishment of the Republic of Brazil

BY

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Reprinted from *The Southwestern Political Science Quarterly*, Volume III, Number 1, June, 1922

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# THE UNITED STATES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

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The relations of the United States and Brazil have been more harmonious, perhaps, than those of any other two American states. The United States was the first country to recognize the independence of Brazil, and the latter was the first of the South American states to signify its approval of and adhesion to the Monroe Doctrine. The friendship thus begun has continued with little interruption until the present day. At first thought, this would seem all the more remarkable since during the most of this long period Brazil was ruled by a monarchy. In reality, however, the character of the Brazilian monarchs, particularly that of Dom Pedro II., and the order and stability which the monarchical form of government gave Brazil have tended to promote rather than hinder the development of friendly intercourse between these two important American states. A survey of public opinion in the United States regarding Dom Pedro II. will reveal remarkable uniformity of admiration and praise.

The last of the Brazilian emperors had scarcely attained his thirty-first year when he was made honorary member of the New York Historical Society, while an address given before that society somewhat later contained the assertion that "Dom Pedro, by his character and his taste, application, and acquisitions in literature and science, ascends from his mere fortuitous position as an Emperor, and takes his place in the world as a man."[1] The great scientist Agassiz seems

[1]D. P. Kidder and J. C. Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians* (Philadelphia, 1857), Chap. XIII.



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to have thought highly of the Emperor, and Mrs. Agassiz records with evident pride the story of their visit to the capital of Brazil.[2] James R. Partridge, who represented the United States at the Brazilian court in the seventies, spoke of Dom Pedro in the following enthusiastic manner:

> The Emperor impressed me in every way as completely entitled to the reputation and popularity he has . . . with all who have ever approached or known him. To the advantages of a fine person, a dignified presence, and most affable address, without the least parade . . . he adds the solid things of admirable good sense, capacity, and knowledge . . . He certainly appeared to me to be the best thing I have seen in Brazil.[3]

The visit of Dom Pedro to the United States in 1876 attracted considerable attention, and furnished occasion for his election to membership in the National Geographical Society and the issuance of a brief biographical sketch in so dignified a publication as the annual report of the Smithsonian Institution.[4] His presence at the Philadelphia Exposition, moreover, gave Bell's telephone an opportune publicity which probably has meant much for the progress of that modern convenience.[5]

Four years later another enthusiastic North American minister at Rio spoke of His Majesty in most complimentary terms:

> The Emperor is a man of large views and fine temper. Among the rulers of the world today, I do not know of one who combines more of the

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[2]See Professor and Mrs. Louis Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil* (Boston, 1871).

[3]*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (1872), pp. 94-95.

[4]The Smithsonian Institution, *Annual Report* (1876), p. 173 ff.; Frank Vincent, *Around and About South America* (New York, 1895), p. 253. Note also Vincent's dedication.

[5]*The Literary Digest*, January 8, 1921, p. 30, quoting F. H. Sweet in *Power Plant Engineering*, gives an interesting account of the Emperor and the telephone.

qualities which constitute a good sovereign. He is a statesman . . . he is a man of generous nature, he desires to promote the happiness of his people, and he comprehends the embarrassments that surround his government.[6]

The deposition of the aged Emperor in 1889 gave occasion for the fullest expression of American sentiment regarding him. If the utterances of the press may be taken as sincere, a good portion of the editors of the country seem to have been in doubt for a moment whether to congratulate Brazil for having set up a republic or to condole with the country on having deprived itself of the services and presence of so great a ruler and man. This attitude may be clearly seen in the following quotations taken from the leading contemporary newspapers:

It is a matter of great regret that the aged Emperor should be driven forth at this last hour of his life. The republic would have come naturally upon his death as a protest against the beliefs and projects of his daughter and her profligate husband; but now it seems almost like a cruel anticipation. The Liberals of Brazil, however, if it shall prove to be the fact that they have overthrown the Government to gain a just freedom, can certainly not be denied our sympathy and applause; and still, with Dom Pedro before us, it is with only half our heart that we can cry "A long life to the republic."[7]

While the world regards Dom Pedro with affectionate admiration, it can not help admitting that the inevitable has come to pass. All will regret, however, that the hour of the Brazilian Republic has struck during the life-time of the noble, progressive, and lovable Dom Pedro.[8]

The people of this country can not regard with disfavor any movement of the people of another

[6]*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (1880), p. 97ff.

[7]New York *Independent*, November 21, 1889.

[8]The Chicago *News*, *November* 18, 1889.

country to set up a republican form of government upon the ruins of a monarchical one. But this Brazilian movement is as yet incomplete; it is not even known whether the people or their self-constituted leaders, supported by the army, have effected the change of government. Even if, however, the revolution was [sic] wholly popular, and an inspiration of the entire people, here in the United States, in this city, where the Emperor was so well known and honored, there will still be regrets that he was forced to resign his great office.[9]

It now belongs to the Brazilians to show themselves equal to the responsibilities of their new situation. What they will make of their opportunities time will determine. Meanwhile the rank in history of their late monarch, as a patriot and statesman, is secure, and Dom Pedro carries with him into his retirement the regrets and good wishes of the civilized world.[10]

Somewhat different in tone but none the less laudatory are the following expressions:

Dom Pedro was one of the best, most liberal, and most progressive emperors that ever ruled. But the system of which he was the head was wrong, and it had to go before the advance of liberty and republicanism.[11]

Among all the "monarchs retired from business," Dom Pedro, of Brazil, is one of the best . . . He was not so much a strong man as a kindly man, seeking more the good of his people than the protection of his throne . . .[12]

The New York *Tribune* saw in the proposed compensation to the Emperor not only a wise political move but an act of justice to a well deserving ruler:

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[9]The Philadelphia *Ledger*, November 20, 1889.
[10]The Washington *Post*, November 20, 1889.
[11]The Baltimore *American*, November 20, 1889.
[12]The Baltimore *Sun*, November 19, 1889.

> Dethronement with compensation on a scale that proves that a republic is not ungrateful to a high-minded and progressive sovereign is hailed with satisfaction throughout Brazil. It is an anomaly in the annals of revolution, for kings are ordinarily lucky if they escape with their lives; but, under the circumstances, it is a just and equitable arrangement. The Emperor did not deserve to be dismissed like a lackey. He has gone out like a prince loaded with benefaction from a people whose quarrel was not with him, but with the monarchical system.[13]

The placidly optimistic view assumed by the Indianapolis *Sentinel* may perhaps not unfittingly be quoted as a sensible and wholesome attitude regarding the whole affair:

> The new *regime* involves little, really, but a change of external forms. Brazil has long been one of the freest countries on the globe—a republic really in everything but the name. The occupant of the imperial throne, too, was a republican at heart, and perhaps he will not repine greatly that the people to whom he is so warmly devoted have cast off, while he is in the flesh to see, the imperial robes that hung so awkwardly upon them.[14]

When the Brazilian revolution was discussed in the Congress of the United States in connection with a resolution proposing immediate recognition of the new republic, not even the most radical anti-monarchists indulged in severe censure of Dom Pedro. In fact, Morgan of Alabama, who introduced the resolution, made it clear that there was not

> slightest criticism . . . against the conduct of that patriotic and eminent man . . . who has been deposed from the imperial throne of that state. His methods of government, his fondness for his peo-

[13]November 19, 1889.

[14]November 18, 1889. For comments of the press of the United States on the general subject of the revolution in Brazil, see *Public Opinion*, VIII (November 23, 1889), p. 159ff.

> ple, his attachment to liberal institutions, his concessions on all occasions to . . . the people themselves have been so conspicuous that our people have . . . formed for him a more distinct and a higher personal attachment than they have ever felt for any emperor who (has) existed since our history begun (sic).[15]

And Sherman of Ohio, the most influential opponent of a hasty recognition of the newly established government of Brazil declared that he was actuated in part by

> a feeling of respect for one of the most distinguished men of our century, a man who, though an emperor, never exercised powers as great as our President; an emperor who was always willing to yield to the will of his subjects; an emperor who never did an unkind act, and in his long reign was a more thorough democrat . . . than any emperor who ever before in the history of the world held that rank.[16]

But the republican ardor of the people of the United States was in reality not cooled by their admiration for the last American emperor. To many the pacific fashion in which Dom Pedro abdicated seemed to indicate a voluntary surrender to what he conceived to be the will of the people, and his departure from Rio de Janeiro signified a deliberate abandonment of all claims of the House of Braganza to Brazil. If hereafter Dom Pedro or any other member of that House should decide to re-assert those claims, the ardent republicans of the United States were inclined to assume that they would do so under European persuasion or pressure and that they could only succeed in recovering the lost American empire with the aid of the European powers. Such persuasion, pressure, or assistance these republicans professed to consider a violation of the Monroe Doctrine.

This fear of European intervention and preference for republican institutions, even in a case where the choice was

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[15]United States *Congressional Record,* 51 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 313.
[16]*Ibid.,* p. 316.

between a republic and one of the best of monarchies, tended to hasten recognition of the new order in Brazil. Another consideration which urged this policy was a desire to secure and retain the friendship and the markets of the largest and most populous Hispanic American state. Consequently, as soon as news of the revolution reached Washington the minister of the United States in Brazil was instructed to maintain diplomatic relations with the provisional government. Moreover, a few days later he was directed to give the republic "a cordial and formal recognition" as soon as the majority of the people of Brazil signified their acceptance of the new regime.[17]

The proposed delay in formal recognition was deemed by the administration a wise precaution in view of the fact that such a step, if taken before the real nature of the revolt had become manifest, might succeed only in strengthening a military despotism whereas its true design would be to advance the cause of popular government in the New World. Yet President Harrison's announcement of his policy to Congress occasioned a somewhat vigorous attempt on the part of aggressive members of the democratic party to force the executive to move more rapidly. They argued that immediate recognition would strengthen the hands of the republicans of Brazil and do much toward discouraging any designs of interference which might be entertained in Europe. The friends of the administration in Congress were able to delay precipitate action, however.[18]

With reference to this policy public opinion was divided, but apparently the majority was in accord with the administration; and although decided partisan coloring may be detected in the press, both parties made it clear that they had the true interests of the Brazilian people at heart. A few quotations will set forth the various motives and cross currents which were operating at the time.

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[17]*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (1889), pp. 61-63.

[18]For the discussions and procedure of Congress, see *Congressional Record*, 51 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 216, 313ff., 323, 871, passim.

Among the newspapers which advocated immediate recognition were the New York *World,* the Indianapolis *Sentinel,* the Savannah *News,* the New Orleans *Picayune,* the Atlanta *Constitution,* and the Omaha *Bee.* The following excerpts will reveal their attitude:

> The United States Government recognized the republic of France within a few hours after it was proclaimed . . . in 1870. It recognized in 1873 the Spanish Republic on the very day that Amadeus was kicked off his throne. And yet the Republican statesmen in Washington insist that the Brazilians must hold an election before it can be determined that their republic is entitled to our recognition. Encouraged by this cowardly policy the reactionists of Brazil are trying to stifle the republic and restore the empire. What a sneaking, pottering, cowardly republic we are having under the rule of the Republican plutocracy.[19]

> What hope and good cheer a prompt and cordial recognition of the new republic by the United States would have sent to the hearts of the lovers of freedom the world over! What an electric thrill the presence of half a dozen American men-of-war in the harbor of Rio Janeiro at this moment would give to republicans and democrats all around the globe! And what a tremendous and decisive significance it would have for kings and their ministers everywhere! But Mr. Harrison and Mr. Blaine and the Republican Senators say we must not pay any attention to the new republic. We must wait until the people of Brazil have formally given it their adherence. We must wait until his imperial majesty, the Czar of Russia, and her royal majesty, the Queen of England, and his imperial majesty, the Emperor of Germany, and all the rest of their . . . majesties, have concluded that "the jig is all up" with the divine right in the New World, and have condescended to permit the Brazilians to try governing themselves. The attitude of the Government at Washington in this matter is enough to make every patriotic American hang his

[19]The New York *World* (Democratic), December 26, 1889.

head with shame. If the Republic of Brazil falls, it will be because the United States withholds its recognition.—Oh, for one week of an Andrew Jackson or a Grover Cleveland in the White House![20]

While it is true that there may be a great deal of trouble in Brazil before the republic is established upon a firm basis, there is no probability of the re-establishment of the empire. The empire is a thing of the past, and the fact that little or no opposition has been made to the republic justifies the conclusion that there is no desire for the return of the deposed Emperor or any member of his family. There does not appear to be any good reason, therefore, for delay in recognizing the republic. Indeed, there are good reasons why there should be haste. Affairs in Brazil are now in a very chaotic condition, and there is a great deal of dissatisfaction with those who are exercising power. Recognition by this Government might help the true patriots to put the republic upon a firm foundation. Delay in extending recognition may encourage those who have no love for the republic, and who may be plotting for its ruin.[21]

Professing, as we Americans do, the utmost zeal and devotion to republican institutions, it would have been the most natural and graceful thing to have promptly recognized the new *regime* in Brazil, an act that would have greatly encouraged the patriots in that country and exerted a sobering effect on those European powers that have shown an inclination to interfere in behalf of the deposed imperial family.[22]

The people of Brazil, who desire to follow in the footsteps of the people of this country, have not received the slightest expression of sympathy from the United States, and they have no means of knowing whether they have the moral support of this country in their efforts to establish a popular government.[23]

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[20]The Indianapolis *Sentinel* (Ibid.), December 22, 1889.
[21]The Savannah *News* (Ibid.), December 22, 1889.
[22]The New Orleans *Picayune* (Ibid.), December 21, 1889.
[23]The Atlanta *Constitution* (Ibid.), December 19, 1889.

> It is both the duty and the interest of the United States to, in every legitimate way, encourage the new republic, and by its countenance, friendship, and influence to strengthen it in the confidence of its own people and in the respect of the world. Recognition would go far toward bringing about these desirable results, and it would undoubtedly have the very general and hearty approval of the American people.[24]

Among the journals which counseled moderation and delay were the Chicago *Herald*, the Philadelphia *Ledger*, the Macon (Ga.) *Telegraph*, the Washington *Star*, the Boston *Advertiser*, and the New York *Sun*. Space permits only very brief quotations from these.

> It would do no harm for the United States Senate to make haste slowly in the recognition of the new *regime* in Brazil. Sufficient time has not elapsed to permit the succession to attain stability or permanency. Unavoidably, affairs are yet in a more or less chaotic condition. . . This Nation has not forgotten the vexation which was caused by the proposed recognition of the Confederacy almost before the smoke had disappeared from the rebel gun which opened on Sumpter. The cases are not exactly parallel, although it is a fact that England had quite as much knowledge of the Confederacy as we have now of the Brazilian Republic, and no more. It would be miraculous if the scattered population of Brazil, with all its variety of blood, interests, and civilization, should pass from a monarchy to a republic without delay or disturbance.[25]

> It is well that the holiday recess of Congress brings Senator Morgan's rather too precipitate resolution for the recognition of the Brazilian revolutionary government to a halt till next month and next year, for by that time we may have some authentic information that will show us which is the right course to pursue. . . Before any measure of recognition should be finally acted upon by

[24]The Omaha *Bee* (Republican), December 19, 1889.
[25]The Chicago *Herald* (Democratic), December 23, 1889.

our Congress, we should have one or other of two things—either an official declaration of the real condition of affairs from the American Minister at Rio, that can be published for the information of the people of the United States; or unmistakeably vouched dispatches from the agents of the Associated Press at Rio Janeiro (sic), Bahia, Para, and Pernambuca—that the wires are open and free to all who wish to send or receive telegraphic messages. Till we have one or other of these assurances or something else in all respects equivalent, Congress should not move one step. It will be nothing better than taking a leap in the dark unless we have them. Instead of helping the people of Brazil to a good republican government such as we would wish to see them have, we may be helping to fasten upon them a *regime* of selfish and grasping military adventurers. . . Let us have at least a chance to look before we leap. The Brazilian people are not asking us to "hurry up."[26]

It seems to us that the Democrats of the Senate are making a mistake in insisting upon the immediate recognition of the Republic of Brazil. In fact, there is no such republic. The government in existence is a military despotism, much less liberal in character than the imperialism which the army overthrew. Under the old *regime* Brazil was governed by a ministry responsible to a Parliament elected by the people. The Emperor was not an active governing force. Under the new *regime* there is no Parliament, no representatives of the people, and the governing power is lodged solely in the hands of certain persons supported by the regular army. The old government was much more of a republic than the new, in spite of the fact that it had an emperor at the head of it. . . Our Government stands as the best example and defender of representative institutions, not of despotisms which may falsely call themselves republics. We can not afford to champion shams; it is our duty to support every genuine attmept to establish representative institutions.[27]

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[26]The Philadelphia *Ledger* (Independent), December 23, 1889.
[27]The Macon *Telegraph* (Democratic), December 23, 1889.

> The question is not whether the people of the United States sympathize with the new Republic of Brazil. It is a question of whether this government may recognize with entire propriety a government which the people of Brazil have not yet had the opportunity of approving or disapproving.[28]

> We can and do rejoice as a people at the signs of the daybreak of republicanism in Brazil, but our Government can not officially act until the people of Brazil have by their ballots freely and fully accepted the new order. No other course is consistent with that prudence and dignity which make recognition of some value when it is given.[29]

> Time, which tries all things, may be trusted to reveal the true inwardness of the Brazilian revolution. Nowhere on this earth is the establishment of a genuine republic so sure to be acclaimed with fervor as it is in the United States. But in our eyes the title of Republic is too sacred to be made the mask, decoy, and catchword of military usurpers.[30]

As a matter of fact, the Republican administration did not require much persuasion or compulsion. The Pan-American interests and sympathies of James G. Blaine who was then Secretary of State are well known. He was not the man to continue a policy of conservatism and caution when reports were current to the effect that other American states and even European countries were recognizing the new republic of Brazil. According, on January 29, 1890, while evidence of the disposition of the Brazilian people toward the revolutionary government must still have remained far from explicit and conclusive, formal recognition

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[28]The Washington *Star* (Independent), December 21, 1889.

[29]The Boston *Advertiser* (Republican), December 20, 1889.

[30]The New York *Sun* (Democratic), December 22, 1889. For a more complete survey of the press with reference to this matter, see *Public Opinion*, VIII (December 28, 1889), p. 279ff.

was extended to the agents of Brazil at Washington.[31] This step rendered a resolution of recognition on the part of Congress superfluous. Friends of the administration pushed through a joint resolution of congratulation, however, and this was presented to the provisional government on April 2, 1890, when the fate of the revolution was still far from certain.[32]

In fact, the overthrow of Don Pedro, as is well known, was followed by more than four years of intermittent disorders. The first president of the republic was overthrown by a faction in his own government, Congress was dissolved, and martial law was declared before the revolutionists had been in power a year. Subsequently the constitutional order was restored, but dissatisfaction was not completely overcome. Finally, in the late summer of 1893 a formidable revolt of the navy occurred. For a time it looked as if the government would be overthrown, but by the close of the following year the insurgents were subdued and Brazil entered upon the regime of orderly republicanism which she has been able to maintain to the present day.

During this period the United States was an interested, a sympathetic, and at times an uneasy observer. Not only was there anxiety to see the republican experiment succeed and the Brazilian people made happy by the achievement of more complete liberty and prosperity, but there was strong apprehension with reference to the possible interference of some of the nations of Europe. In the summer of 1890 the United States dispatched a small squadron southward with orders to make a "friendly visit" to Rio. Near the close of the year 1891 when fear of plots to restore the monarchy led to the dissolution of the Brazilian Congress and the proclamation of martial law, the executive department at Washington counseled moderation.[33] Later, after the revolt

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[31]John Bassett Moore, *A Digest of International Law* (Washington, 1906), I, 160-161; J. M. Cardosa de Oliveira, *Actos Diplomaticos de Brazil* (Rio, 1912), II, 162.

[32]*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (1890), pp. 22-27.

[33]*Ibid.* (1891), p. 42; (1890), pp. 23-27.

of the navy had broken out and war-vessels of the leading European states appeared at Rio, the naval contingent of the United States in the region was effectively augmented, and there was considerable discussion of the Monroe Doctrine in the press.[34] In speaking of the situation at this time President Cleveland remarked:

> It appearing at an early stage of the insurrection that its course would call for unusual watchfulness on the part of our government, our naval force in the harbor of Rio de Janeiro was strengthened. This precaution, I am satisfied, tended to restrict the issue to a simple trial of strength between the Brazilian government and the insurgents and to avert complications which at times seemed imminent.[35]

No nation ever proved itself more deserving or more grateful for the kindly interest and profound sympathy of a friendly power than did Brazil. One of the first acts of the republican congress was the passage of resolutions of thanks to the United States;[36] one of the first important international agreements of the new government granted the United States valuable commercial concessions.[37] Exhortations to moderation which might have been resented, or cooly received, by a less broad minded or more sensitive government were accepted with utmost good faith. The Brazilian minister at Washington was directed to

> transmit to the President of the United States of America the expressions of gratefulness of the President of the United States of Brazil for the deep interest manifested for the new political institutions of this country. The moderation that he would advise is born in the character of the Bra-

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[34] *Ibid.* (1893), p. 45ff. See also, in connection with rumors of European sympathy with the insurgents, J. B. Moore, op. cit., VI, 439 and authorities cited; *Public Opinion*, VIII-XVI (1890-1894), index.

[35] J. D. Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, IX, 524.

[36] *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (1891), pp. 50-51.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 44, 46. *passim.*

zilian people, in the sentiment and in the policy of its President, and has been practiced by his Government. The President acknowledges with great satisfaction that in this instance, as in so many others, the two republics find themselves in perfect accord. . .[38]

On April 15, 1892, in accordance with a previous agreement with the La Plata government, the President of Brazil requested the chief executive of the United States to serve as arbiter in the boundary question pending between these two Hispanic American republics;[39] July 4, 1894, was celebrated by an informal holiday and great pomp and ceremony in Rio de Jameiro; on November 15, following, the corner stone of the pedestal of a proposed monument to James Monroe was laid;[40] and in December, 1895, when news of Cleveland's stand with reference to the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary dispute reached the Brazilian capital, both houses of congress passed resolutions congratulating the government of Washington, while the Senate of the South American republic sent greetings and congratulations "to the Senate of the United States of America upon the worthy message of President Cleveland, who so strenuously guards the dignity, the sovereignty, and the freedom of the American nations."[41] The understanding between the two republics could scarcely have been more cordial and complete.

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[38] *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (1891), p. 52.

[39] *Ibid.* (1892), pp. 17-19.

[40] *Ibid.* (1894), pp. 85-86, *passim.*

[41] *Ibid.* (1895), pp. 75-76.

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